Java 8 Programmer II Study Guide



Chapter TWENTY-FOUR NIO.2

Exam Objectives

Use Path interface to operate on file and directory paths.
Use Files class to check, read, delete, copy, move, manage metadata of a file or directory.

NIO.2

In the last chapter, we reviewed the classes of the <code>java.io</code> package.

In the first versions of Java, this package, especially the <code>File</code> class, provided support for file operations. However, it had some problems, like lacking functionality and limited file attribute support.

For that reason, Java 1.4 introduced the NIO (Non-blocking Input/Output) API in the package <code>java.nio</code> implementing new functionality like channels, buffering, and new charsets

However, this API didn't entirely solve the problems with the <code>java.io</code> package, so in Java 7, the NIO.2 API was added in the <code>java.nio.file</code> package (actually, since this is a new package, NIO.2 is not an update to the NIO API, besides, they focus on different things).

NIO.2 provides better support for accessing files and the file system, symbolic links, interoperability, and exceptions among others.

The primary classes of <code>java.nio.file</code>, <code>Path</code>, <code>Paths</code>, and <code>Files</code>, are intended to provide an easier way to work with files and to be a replacement for the <code>java.io.File</code> class.

These classes will be the focus of this chapter. Let's start with Path and Paths.

The Path interface

In the previous chapter, we also reviewed concepts like file systems and paths.

Well, the Path interface defines an object that represents the path to a file or a directory.

When you think about the fact that a path varies between different file systems, it makes sense that Path is an interface. Thanks to this, Java transparently handles different implementations between platforms.

For example, here are some differences between Windows-based and Unix-based systems:

- Windows-based systems are not case sensitive while Unix-based systems are.
- In Windows-based systems, paths are separated by backslashes. In Unix-based systems, by forward slashes.
- In Windows-based systems, the root path is a drive letter (generally c:\). In Unix-based systems, it's a forward slash (/).
- Because of that, in Windows-based systems, an absolute path starts with a drive letter (like c:\temp\file.txt). In Unix-based systems, it starts with a forward slash (like /temp/file.txt).

Since Path is an interface and Java handles its implementations, we have to use a utility class to create Path instances.

java.nio.file.Paths is this class. It provides two methods to create a Path object:

```
static Path get(String first, String... more)
static Path get(URI uri)
```

Be very careful with the names:

Path is the **interface** with methods to work with paths.

Paths is the class with static methods to create a Path object.

With the first version of Paths.get() you can create a Path object in these ways:

```
// With an absolute path in windows
Path pathWin = Paths.get("c:\\temp\\file.txt");
// With an absolute path in unix
Path pathUnix = Paths.get("/temp/file.txt");
// With a relative path
Path pathRelative = Paths.get("file.txt");
//Using the varargs parameter
// (the separator is inserted automatically)
Path pathByParts = Paths.get("c:", "temp", "file.txt");
```

With the second version, you have to use a <code>java.net.URI</code> instance. Since we're working with files, the URI schema must be <code>file://:</code>

```
try {
    Path fileURI = Paths.get(new URI("file:///c:/temp/file.txt"));
} catch (URISyntaxException e) {
    //This checked exception is thrown by the URI constructor
}
```

If you don't want to catch URISyntaxException, you can use the static method URI.create(String). It wraps the URISyntaxException exception in an IllegalArgumentException (a subclass of RuntimeException):

```
Path fileURI = Paths.get(URI.create("file:///c:/temp/file.txt"));
```

Notice the three slashes. file:/// represents an absolute path (the file:// schema plus another slash for the root directory). We can test this with the help of the

toAbsolutePath() method, which returns the absolute path representation of a Path object:

```
Path fileURI = Paths.get(URI.create("file:///file.txt"));
System.out.println(fileURI.toAbsolutePath());
```

This will print either:

```
C:\file.txt // in Windows-based systems
/file.txt // Or in Unix-based systems
```

We can also create a Path from a File and vice-versa:

```
File file = new File("/file.txt");
Path path = file.toPath();

path = Paths.get("/file.txt");
file = path.toFile();
```

And just to make clear that the Path instance is system-dependent, let me tell you that Paths.get() is actually equivalent to:

```
Path path = FileSystems.getDefault().getPath("c://temp");
```

As you can see from the examples, the absolute path representation of a Path object has a root component (either c:\ or /) and a sequence of names separated by a (forward or backward) slash.

These names represent the directories needed to navigate to the target file or directory. The last name in the sequence represents the name of the target file or directory.

For example, the elements of the path c:\temp\dir1\file.txt (or its Unix equivalent, /temp/dir1/file.txt) are:

```
Root: c:\ (or /)
Name 1: temp
Name 2: dir1
Name 3: file.txt
```

The Path object has some methods to get this information. Except for toString() and getNameCount(), each of these methods returns a Path object):

```
Path path = Paths.get("C:\\temp\\dir1\\file.txt");
// Or Path path = Paths.get("/temp/dir1/file.txt");
System.out.println("toString(): " + path.toString());
System.out.println("getFileName(): " + path.getFileName());
System.out.println("getNameCount(): " +path.getNameCount());
// Indexes start from zero
System.out.println("getName(0): " + path.getName(0));
System.out.println("getName(1): " + path.getName(1));
System.out.println("getName(2): " + path.getName(2));
// subpath(beginIndex, endIndex) from beginIndex to endIndex-1
System.out.println("subpath(0,2): " + path.subpath(0,2));
System.out.println("getParent(): " + path.getParent());
System.out.println("getRoot(): " + path.getRoot());
```

The output:

```
toString(): C:\temp\dir1\file.txt // Or /temp/dir1/file.txt
getFileName(): file.txt
getNameCount(): 3
getName(0): temp
getName(1): dir1
getName(2): file.txt
subpath(0,2): temp\dir1 // Or temp/dir1
getParent(): C:\temp\dir1 // Or /temp/dir1
getRoot(): C:\ // Or /
```

Passing an invalid index to getName() and subpath() will throw an IllegalArgumentException (a RuntimeException).

If the path is specified as a relative one (and assuming this code is executed from the c:\temp directory):

```
Path path = Paths.get("dir1\\file.txt");// Or dir1/file.txt
System.out.println("toString(): " + path.toString());
System.out.println("getFileName(): " + path.getFileName());
System.out.println("getNameCount(): " + path.getNameCount());
System.out.println("getName(0): " + path.getName(0));
System.out.println("getName(1): " + path.getName(1));
System.out.println("subpath(0,2): " + path.subpath(0,2));
System.out.println("getParent(): " + path.getParent());
System.out.println("getRoot(): " + path.getRoot());
```

The output:

```
toString(): dir1\file.txt // Or dir1/file.txt
getFileName(): file.txt
getNameCount(): 2
getName(0): dir1
getName(1): file.txt
subpath(0,2): dir1\file.txt // Or dir1/file.txt
getParent(): dir1
getRoot(): null
```

When working with paths, you can use:

- . to refer to the current directory
- .. to refer to the parent directory

For example:

```
// refers to /temp/file.txt
Path p1 = Paths.get("/temp/./file.txt");
// refers to /temp//file.txt
Path p2 = Paths.get( "/temp/dir1/../file.txt");
```

In these cases, you can use the <code>normalize()</code> method to remove redundancies like . and .. (in other words, to "normalize" it):

```
Path path = Paths.get("/temp/dir1/../file.txt");
System.out.println(path); // /temp/dir1/../file.txt
Path path2 = path.normalize();
System.out.println(path2); // /temp/file.txt
```

This method does not access the file system to know if a file exists, so removing .. and a preceding name from a path may result in a path that no longer references the original file. This can happen when that previous name is a symbolic link (a reference to another file).

It's better to use the toRealPath() method:

```
Path toRealPath(LinkOption... options) throws IOException
```

This method does the following:

- If LinkOption.NOFOLLOW_LINKS is passed as an argument, symbolic links are not followed (by default it does).
- If the path is relative, it returns an absolute path.
- It returns a Path with redundant elements removed (if any).

We can combine two paths. There are two cases.

First case. If we have an absolute path and we want to combine it with a second path that doesn't have a root element (a partial path), the second path is appended:

```
Path path = Paths.get("/temp");
System.out.println(path.resolve("newDir")); // /temp/newDir
```

Second case. If we have a partial or relative path, and we want to combine it with an absolute path, this absolute path is returned:

```
Path path = Paths.get("newDir");
System.out.println(path.resolve("/temp")); // /temp
```

relativize() is another interesting method.

path1.relativize(path2) is like saying give me a path that shows how to get from path1 to path2.

For example, if we are in directory <code>/temp</code> and we want to go to <code>/temp/dir1/subdir</code>, we have to go first to dir1 and then to subdir:

```
Path path1 = Paths.get("temp");
Path path2 = Paths.get("temp/dir1/file.txt");
Path path1ToPath2 = path1.relativize(path2); // dir1/file.txt
```

If the paths represent two relatives paths without any other information, they are considered siblings, so you have to go to the parent directory and then go to the other directory:

```
Path path1 = Paths.get("dir1");
Path path1ToPath2 = path1.relativize(Paths.get("dir2")); // ../dir2
```

Notice that both examples use relative paths.

If one of the paths is an absolute path, a relative path cannot be constructed because of the lack of information and a <code>llegalArgumentException</code> will be thrown.

If both paths are absolute, the result is system-dependent.

Path implements the Iterable interface so you can do something like this:

```
Path path = Paths.get("c:\\temp\\dir1\file.txt");
for(Path name : path) {
    System.out.println(name);
}
```

The output:

```
temp
dir1
file.txt
```

Path implements the Comparable interface and the equals() method to test two paths for equality.

compareTo() compares two paths lexicographically. It returns:

- Zero if the argument is equal to the path,
- A value less than zero if this path is lexicographically less than the argument, or
- A value greater than zero if this path is lexicographically greater than the argument.

The equals() implementation is system-dependent (for example, it's case insensitive on Windows systems). However, it returns false if the argument is not a Path or if it belongs to a different file system.

In addition, the methods <code>startsWith()</code> and <code>endsWith()</code> both test whether a path begins or ends with some <code>string</code> (in this case, the methods return <code>true</code> only if the string represents an actual element) or <code>Path</code>. So given:

```
Path absPath = Paths.get("c:\\temp\\dir1\\file.txt");
Path relPath = Paths.get("temp\\dir1\\file.txt");
```

```
boolean startsWith(Path other)
absPath.startsWith(Paths.get("c:\\temp\\file.txt")); // false
absPath.startsWith(Paths.get("c:\\temp\\dir1\\img.jpg")); // false
absPath.startsWith(Paths.get("c:\\temp\\dir1\\")) // true
absPath.startsWith(Paths.get("c:\\temp\\dir1\\")) // true
absPath.startsWith(relPath); // false

boolean startsWith(String other)
relPath.startsWith("temp"); // true
relPath.startsWith("temp"); // false
relPath.startsWith("temp\\dir1"); // true

boolean endsWith("temp\\dir1"); // true

boolean endsWith(Path other)
absPath.endsWith("d:\\temp\\dir1\\file.txt"); // false
relPath.endsWith(String other)
relPath.endsWith(String other)
relPath.endsWith("file.txt"); // false
relPath.endsWith("file.txt"); // false
relPath.endsWith("\dir1\\file.txt"); // false
relPath.endsWith("\dir1\\file.txt"); // false
relPath.endsWith("\dir1\\file.txt"); // true
```

These methods don't take into account trailing separators, so if we have the Path temp/dir1, invoking, for example, endsWith() with dir1/, it returns true.

The Files class

The java.nio.file.Files class has static methods for common operations on files and directories. In contrast with the java.io.File class, all methods of Files work with Path objects (so don't confuse File and Files).

For example, we can check if a path actually exists (or doesn't exist) with the methods:

```
static boolean exists(Path path, LinkOption... options)
static boolean notExists(Path path, LinkOption... options)
```

If LinkOption.NOFOLLOW_LINKS is present, symbolic links are not followed (by default they are).

We can check if a path is readable (it's not if the file doesn't exist or if the JVM doesn't have the privileges to access it):

```
static boolean isReadable(Path path)
```

We can check if a path is writable (it's not if the file doesn't exist or if the JVM doesn't have the privileges to access it):

```
static boolean isWritable(Path path)
```

We can check if a file exists and is executable:

```
static boolean isExecutable(Path path)
```

Or even check if two paths refer to the same file (useful if one path represents a symbolic link). If both Path objects are equal then this method returns true without checking if the file exists:

```
static boolean isSameFile(Path path,
Path path2) throws IOException
```

To read a file, we can load the entire file into memory (only useful for small files) with the methods:

For example:

Or to read a file in an efficient way:

```
static BufferedReader newBufferedReader(Path path)
throws IOException
static BufferedReader newBufferedReader(Path path, Charset cs)
throws IOException
```

For example:

```
Path path = Paths.get("/temp/dir1/files.txt");
// By default it uses StandardCharsets.UTF_8
```

The Files class has two methods to delete files/directories.

```
static void delete(Path path) throws IOException
```

It removes the file/directory or throws an exception if something fails:

```
try {
    Files.delete(Paths.get("/temp/dir1/file.txt"));
    Files.delete(Paths.get("/temp/dir1"));
} catch (NoSuchFileException nsfe) {
    // If the file/directory doesn't exists
} catch (DirectoryNotEmptyException dnee) {
    // To delete a directory, it must be empty,
    // otherwise, this exception is thrown
} catch (IOException ioe) {
    // File permission or other problems
}
```

The second method is:

```
static boolean deleteIfExists(Path path) throws IOException
```

This method returns true if the file was deleted or false if the file could not be removed because it did not exist, in other words, unlike the first method, this doesn't throw a NoSuchFileException (but it still throws a DirectoryNotEmptyException and an IOException for other problems):

```
try {
    Files.delete(Paths.get("/temp/dir1/file.txt"));
} catch (DirectoryNotEmptyException dnee) {
    // To delete a directory, it must be empty,
} catch (IOException ioe) {
    // File permission or other problems
}
```

To copy files/directories, we have the method:

```
static Path copy(Path source, Path target,
CopyOption... options) throws IOException
```

It returns the path to the target file, and when copying a directory, its content won't be copied.

By default, the copy fails if the destination file already exists. Also, file attributes won't be copied, and when copying a symbolic link, its target will be copied.

We can customize this behavior with the following CopyOption enums:

StandardCopyOption.REPLACE EXISTING

Performs the copy when the target already exists. If the target is a symbolic link, the link itself is copied and If the target is a non-empty directory, a FileAlreadyExistsException is thrown.

StandardCopyOption.COPY_ATTRIBUTES

Copies the file attributes associated with the file to the target file. The exact attributes supported are file system and platform dependent, except for last-modified-time, which is supported across platforms.

• LinkOption.NOFOLLOW_LINKS
Indicates that symbolic links should not be followed, just copied.

Here's an example:

There are methods to copy between a stream and a Path also:

```
static long copy(InputStream in, Path target,
CopyOption... options) throws IOException
```

Copies all bytes from an input stream to a file. By default, the copy fails if the target already exists or is a symbolic link. If the StandardCopyOption.REPLACE_EXISTING option is specified, and the target file already exists, then it is replaced if it's not a non-empty directory. If the target file exists and is a symbolic link, then the symbolic link is replaced. Actually, in Java 8, the REPLACE_EXISTING option is the only option required to be supported by this method.

```
static long copy(Path source,
OutputStream out) throws IOException
```

Copies all bytes from a file to an output stream.

For example:

```
try (InputStream in = new FileInputStream("in.csv");
     OutputStream out = new FileOutputStream("out.csv")) {
   Path path = Paths.get("/temp/in.txt");
   // Copy stream data to a file
   Files.copy(in, path);
   // Copy the file data to a stream
   Files.copy(path, out);
} catch (IOException e) { /** ... */ }
```

To move or rename a file/directory, we have the method:

```
static Path move(Path source, Path target,
CopyOption... options) throws IOException
```

By default, this method will follow links, throw an exception if the file already exists, and not perform an atomic move.

We can customize this behavior with the following copyOption enums:

StandardCopyOption.REPLACE_EXISTING
 Performs the move when the target already exists. If the target is a symbolic link, only the link itself is moved.

StandardCopyOption.ATOMIC_MOVE

Performs the move as an atomic file operation. If the file system does not support an atomic move, an exception is thrown.

This method can move a non-empty directory. However, if the target exists, trying to move a non-empty directory will throw a <code>DirectoryNotEmptyException</code>. This exception will also be thrown when trying to move a non-empty directory across a drives or partitions.

For example:

Managing metadata

When talking about a file system, metadata give us information about a file or directory, like its size, permissions, creation date, etc. This information is referred as attributes, and some of them are system-dependent.

The Files class has some methods to get or set some attributes from a Path object:

```
static long size(Path path) throws IOException
```

Returns the size of a file (in bytes).

```
static boolean isDirectory(Path path, LinkOption... options)
```

Tests whether a file is a directory.

```
static boolean isRegularFile(Path path, LinkOption... options)
```

Tests whether a file is a regular file.

```
static boolean isSymbolicLink(Path path)
```

Tests whether a file is a symbolic link.

```
static boolean isHidden(Path path) throws IOException
```

Tells whether a file is considered hidden.

Returns or updates a file's last modified time.

```
static UserPrincipal getOwner(Path path,
LinkOption... options) throws IOException
```

```
static Path setOwner(Path path,
UserPrincipal owner) throws IOException
```

Returns or updates the owner of the file.

In methods that take an optional LinkOption.NOFOLLOW_LINKS, symbolic links are not followed (by default they are).

In the case of getLastModifiedTime() and setLastModifiedTime() the class
java.nio.file.attribute.FileTime represents the value of a file's time stamp attribute.

We can create an instance of FileTime with these static methods:

```
static FileTime from(Instant instant)
static FileTime from(long value, TimeUnit unit)
static FileTime fromMillis(long value)
```

And from a FileTime we can get an Instant or milliseconds as long:

```
Instant toInstant()
long toMillis()
```

For example:

In the case of <code>getOwner()</code> and <code>setOwner()</code> the interface <code>java.nio.file.attribute.UserPrincipal</code> is an abstract representation of an identity that can be used like this:

These methods are useful to get or update a single attribute. But we can also get a group of related attributes by functionality or by a particular systems implementation as a view.

The three most common view classes are:

- java.nio.file.attribute.BasicFileAttributeView
 Provides a view of basic attributes supported by all file systems.
- java.nio.file.attribute. DosFileAttributeView

 Extends BasicFileAttributeView to support additionally a set of DOS attribute
 flags that are used to indicate if the file is read-only, hidden, a system file, or
 archived.
- java.nio.file.attribute. PosixFileAttributeView Extends BasicFileAttributeView with attributes supported on POSIX systems,

such as Linux and Mac. Examples of these attributes are file owner, group owner, and related access permissions.

You can get a file attribute view of a given type to read or update a set of attributes with the method:

For example, BasicFileAttributeView has only one update method:

```
try {
  Path path = Paths.get("/temp/dir/file.txt");
   BasicFileAttributeView view =
      Files.getFileAttributeView(path,
                 BasicFileAttributeView.class);
   // Get a class with read-only attributes
  BasicFileAttributes readOnlyAttrs =
                   view.readAttributes();
  FileTime lastModifiedTime =
                   FileTime.from(Instant.now());
  FileTime lastAccessTime =
                   FileTime.from(Instant.now());
  FileTime createTime =
                   FileTime.from(Instant.now());
  //If any argument is null,
  //the corresponding value is not changed
  view.setTimes(lastModifiedTime,
                 lastAccessTime,
                 createTime);
} catch (IOException e) { /** ... */ }
```

Most of the time, you'll work with the read-only versions of the file views. In this case, you can use the following method to get them directly:

The second parameter is the return type of the method, the class that contains the attributes to use (notice that all attributes classes extend from BasicFileAttributes because it contains attributes common to all file systems). The third argument is when you want to follow symbolic links.

Here's an example of how to access the file attributes of a file using the java.nio.file.attribute.BasicFileAttributes Class:

```
// The following methods return a FileTime instance
System.out.println("creationTime(): " + attr.creationTime());
System.out.println("lastModifiedTime():"+attr.lastModifiedTime());
System.out.println("lastAccessTime(): " + attr.lastAccessTime());
} catch (IOException e) { /** ... */ }
```

Key Points

- The primary classes of java.nio.file are Path, Paths, and Files. They are intended to be a replacement of the java.io.File class.
- The Path interface defines an object that represents the path to a file or a directory.
- java.nio.file.Paths provides methods to create a Path object.
- The absolute path representation of a Path object has a root component (either c:\ or /) and a sequence of names separated by a (forward or backward) slash.
- The Path interface has methods get the elements of the path, normalize paths, and get attributes of the path (isAbsolute(), getFileSystem(), etc), among others. It also implements Comparable and equals() to test for equality.
- The <code>java.nio.file.Files</code> class has static methods for common operations on files and directories. In contrast with the <code>java.io.File</code> class , all methods of <code>Files</code> work with <code>Path</code> objects.
- Examples of these operations are checking the existence of a file, copying, moving, deleting, and reading.
- You can also get attributes of a file individually (with methods like isHidden()) or in a group through views.
- The three most common view classes are BasicFileAttributeView, DosFileAttributeView, and PosixFileAttributeView.
- You can get a file attribute view of a given type to read or update a set of attributes with the method getFileAttributeView().
- You can get a class that is a read-only version of the view with the method readAttributes().

Self Test

1. Given:

```
Path path1 = Paths.get("/projects/work/../fun");
Path path2 = Paths.get("games");
System.out.println(path1.resolve(path2));
```

Which of the following is the result of executing the above lines?

- A. /project/work/fun/games
- B. /project/fun/games
- C. /project/work/../fun/games
- D. games

2. Given:

```
Path path = Paths.get("c:\\Users\\mark");
```

Which of the following will return users?

- A. path.getRoot()
- B. path.getName(0)
- C. path.getName(1)
- D. path.subpath(0, 0);

- 3. Which of the following is not a valid <code>copyOption</code> for <code>Files.copy()</code>?
- A. NOFOLLOW_LINKS
- B. REPLACE_EXISTING
- C. ATOMIC_MOVE
- D. COPY_ATTRIBUTES

4. Given:

```
Path path =
  Paths.get("c:\\.\\temp\\data\\..\\.\\dir\\..\\file.txt");
try {
  path = path.toRealPath();
} catch (IOException e) { }
System.out.println(path.subpath(1,2));
```

Which is the result?

- A. temp
- B. data
- C. dir
- D. file.txt

5. Which of the following is a valid way to set a file's create time?

A.

В.

```
Files.setCreateTime(path,
   FileTime.from(Instance.now());
```

C.

D.

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